

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USBERL 00302 181745Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 0302

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, WB, GE, GW

SUBJECT: GDR PUSHING HARD FOR S-BAHN NEGOTIATIONS

REF: 75 USBERLIN 2631

1. SUMMARY: GDR IS PUSHING SENAT HARD TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS ON SUBSIDIZING S-BAHN OPERATIONS IN WESTERN SECTORS THREATENING THAT IT WILL TAKE UNPLEASANT DECISIONS IF SENAT DOES NOT AGREE TO START NEGOTIATIONS IN NEXT FEW DAYS. FOR TIME BEING AT LEAST GDR APPEARS TO BE ADVANCING LINE THAT ONLY PURPOSE OF SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE TO DECIDE ON SIZE OF SENAT CHECK. SENAT IN TURN HAS TOLD US THAT, EVEN IF IT WERE INTERESTED AND THERE APPEARED TO BE POSSIBILITY OF GETTING GDR TO CONSIDER SCHEME UNDER WHICH SENAT WOULD OBTAIN SOME OPERATING CONTROL OVER S-BAHN, THERE SIMPLY IS NO FRG MONEY AVAILABLE. ITS INCLINATION, THEREFORE, IS TO SIT TIGHT AND MAYOR SCHUETZ HAS TOLD US HE WANTS TO BREAK OFF TALKS.

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PAGE 02 USBERL 00302 181745Z

POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT GDR WILL SEEK TO CUT ITS COSTS UNILATERALLY BY REDUCING OR EVEN ELIMINATING SOME OF

HIGHER LOSS S-BAHN RUNS, BUT NEITHER WE NOR SENAT EXPECT THIS WOULD HAPPEN, AT LEAST TO IMPORTANT DEGREE, OVERNIGHT. END SUMMARY:

2. GDR HAS FORCED PACE OF ITS HITHERTO FAIRLY LEISURELY EFFORT TO DRAW SENAT INTO S-BAHN NEGOTIATIONS AT THREE RECENT MEETINGS. HEAD OF WEST BERLIN SECTION IN GDR FOREIGN OFFICE, MITDANK, TOLD SENAT PRESS SPOKESMAN STRUVE FEBRUARY 6 THAT GDR REQUIRED PROMPT ANSWER TO NEGOTIATION PROPOSAL PENDING FOR NEARLY A YEAR. MITDANK SAID GDR CONSIDERED SENAT'S CLAIM NOT TO HAVE MONEY FOR S-BAHN SUBSIDY "PURE EXCUSE" AND THAT GDR WOULD NOT CONTINUE SAME LEVEL OF SERVICE UNLESS SENAT DECLARED ITSELF PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN S-BAHN FINANCING. HE SAID GDR WANTED ANSWER TO FOLLOWING THREE QUESTIONS: A) DOES OR DOES NOT SENAT DESIRE A SENSIBLE ARRANGEMENT? B) IS OR IS NOT SENAT INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING S-BAHN TRAFFIC? C) IS SENAT READY TO PAY IN ORDERLY WAY FOR ORDERLY SERVICE?"

3. RATHER THAN ANSWERING GDR QUESTIONS DIRECTLY, SENAT VISITS ARRANGEMENT PLENIPOTENTIARY, KUNZE, MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO MITDANK FEBRUARY 12 ON GOVERNING MAYOR'S INSTRUCTIONS: "YOU RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT S-BAHN TRAFFIC IN THE WESTERN SECTORS FEBRUARY 6, 1976, IN A CONVERSATION CARRIED OUT ON A PERSONAL BASIS. YOU ASSERTED IN THIS CONVERSATION THAT THE BERLIN SENAT HAD EXPRESSED ITS READINESS TO CONSIDER IF IT WAS ABLE TO ENGAGE IN OFFICIAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GDR GOVERNMENT OVER S-BAHN TRAFFIC IN THE WESTERN SECTORS. THIS ASSERTION IS INCORRECT. IN ADDITION TO THE FACT THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE REICHS-BAHN, NOT THE GDR GOVERNMENT, IS COMPETENT FOR THE QUESTIONS ADDRESSED, THIS IS A MATTER FOR THE ALLIES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN. THAT HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN CLEARLY SAID. YOUR INVITATION TO OFFICIAL NEGOTIATIONS IS THEREFORE NOT ACCEPTED." MITDANK EXPRESSED DISPLEASURE AND CONTINUED TO PRESS, WITHOUT RESULT, FOR ANSWERS TO THREE QUESTIONS HE HAD
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PAGE 03 USBERL 00302 181745Z

POSED AT EARLIER MEETING THROUGH HE REPHRASED THEM marginally.

4. MITDANK'S DEPUTY TOLD KUNZE'S DEPUTY AT FEBRUARY 16 MEETING ON VISITS ARRANGEMENT THAT GDR WAS "ASTKE" AT SENAT ATTITUDE AND WOULD NOT ALLOW ITSELF TO BE LEFT "HANGING" WAITING FOR ANSWERS. MITE SUBSEQUENTLY TELEGRAPHED INVITATION TO KUNZE TO CONTINUE S-BAHN DISCUSSIONS FEBRUARY 20 OR 23.

5. ON FEBRUARY 18 GOVERNING MAYOR SCHUETZ IN DISCUSSION

WITH COMMANDANTS AND MINISTERS GAVE WHAT APPEARS TO BE DEFINITIVE SENAT REACTION TO PROBLEM.HE CHARACTERIZED S-BAHN AS CONVENIENT BUT NOT IN FINAL ANALYSIS INDISPENSABLE OR EVEN VERY IMPORTANT FOR INTERNAL TRANSIT IN WEST BERLIN. THE GDR IS OBVOUSLY IN NEED OF MONEY, AND SEES FANCED WEST BERLIN NEED OF S-BAHN AS POSSIBILITY TO RAISE CASH. SENAT, HOWEVER, HAS NO FUNDS AND CANNOT OBTAIN THEM FROM FRG TO ASSUME COSTS OF THIS MARGINAL SERVICE. HE SAYS HE HAS TOLD HIS PEOPLE TO MAKE CLEAR TO GDR THAT SENAT HAS NOTHING TO SAY ON MATTER. HE IS FURTHERMORE OPPOSED TO DIVERTING DISCUSSION RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE SEMI-AUTONOMOUS BVG(BERLIN TRANSPORT COMPANY, BERLIN VERKEHRSGESELLSCHAFT, WHICH OPERATES WEST BERLIN U-BAHN AND BUS LINES). THE SUBJECT IS SIMPLY NOT WORTH PURSUING. THE MAYOR DOUBTS THAT THE GDR WILL EXECUTE ITS THREATS OF "CONSEQUENCES," EITHER BY HALTING THE SERVICE OR REDUCING IT SIGNIFICANTLY. IF THIS SHOULD HAPPEN, HOWEVER, HE CONSIDERED IT WOULD

CONSTITUTE VIOLATION OF A SOVIET COMMITMENT TO THE WESTERN ALLIES STEMMING BACK TO THE EARLY DAYS IN BERLIN, AND WOULD THUS BE A MATER BETWEEN FOUR POWERS IN WHICH SENAT WOULD NOT BE DIRECTLY INVOLVED. HE THINKS THE SOVIETS HAVE NO WISH TO BECOME EMBROILED IN SOMETHING LIKE THIS, I.E., WILL PROBABLY RESTRAIN GDR FROM RASH S-BAHN ACTION.

6. COMMENT: IF THIS IS FACT IS THE FINAL SENAT DECISION, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH IT. THERE ARE SOME SIGNS THAT THE GDR POSITION IS SOFT OR TENTATIVE. KUNZE'S "PRIVATE" GDR CONTACT, PROFESSOR SEIFFERT (REFTTEL) HAS SEVERAL TIMES INDICATED THAT MITDANK IS MAKING SPECIAL PITCH FOR FOREIGN MINISTRY WHICH WISHES TO SHOW THAT IT CAN GET SENAT MANEY
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PAGE 04 USBERL 00302 181745Z

WITHOUT MAKING SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSIONS. SEIFFERT ALSO INFORMED KUNZE ON FEBRUARY 13 THAT GDR HAS STILL NOT RECEIVED ANSWER FROM THE SOVIET EMBASSY AS TO WHAT IT MIGHT DO WITH THE S-BAHN. (IT IS TRUE THAT SOME SOVIET RESPONSIBILITIES ARE INVOLVED.) FURTHERMORE, HE SAID THAT SOVIET ANSWER IS UN-LIKELY UNTIL AFTER CPSU CONGRESS, I.E., FOR ANOTHER MONTH AT LEAST. IT MAY WELL BE THAT MITDANK IS PLAYING RATHER EMPTY BLUFF, AND THAT GDR REACTION TO A SOVIET TURNAWAY WOULD BE MINIMAL OR NON-EXISTENT.

7. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER AFTER RECEIVING REACTIONS OF OTHER MISSIONS. WE WILL ALSO COMMENT ON SOME POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF SOVIET ROLE.GEORGE

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